

Manipur Yatra ~ North-East India



Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra - ISKCON Imphal, Manipur

The beautiful state of Manipur is in North-East India. Manipur has a unique culture and is also known as 'Land of Gandharvas' and 'Switzerland of East'. Manipur is a Vaishnava state with Krishna Consciousness being practiced widely amongst the common masses. "Royal families at Manipur and Tripura are descendants of Arjuna's son Babhruvahana", as stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 1 chapter 12 verse 21 purport, by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-acarya of ISKCON. Arjuna begot a son named Babhruvahana by the womb of Citrangada, the princess of Manipur. Babhruvahana became the adopted son of the king of Manipur. Arjuna married four wives: Draupadi, Subhadra, Citrangada and Ulupi, from whom he got four sons of the names Srutakirti, Abhimanyu, Babhruvahana and Iravan respectively. After the battle of Kuruksetra, when Maharaja Yudhisthira performed Ashvamedha yajna (Horse Sacrifice), Arjuna was defeated by his son Babhruvahana, when sacrificial horse entered Manipur. Arjuna challenged Babhruvahana to fight, despite Babhruvahana's reluctance. During the fight, Arjuna fell unconscious when Ulupi saved him.

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 9 chapter 22 verse 32 mentions, sutayam babhruvahanam manipura-pateh so 'pi tat-putrah putrika-sutah: "By his wife the princess of Manipur, Arjuna had a son named Babhruvahana, who became the adopted son of the Manipuri king." Purport: "It is to be understood that Parvati (the wife of Lord Siva) is the daughter of the king of the very, very old mountainous country known as the Manipura state. 5000 years ago, when the Pandavas ruled, Manipura existed, as did its king. Therefore this kingdom is a very old, aristocratic Vaisnava kingdom. If this kingdom is organized as a Vaisnava state, this revitalization will be a great success because for five thousand years this state has maintained its identity. If the Vaisnava spirit is revived there, it will be a wonderful place, renowned throughout the entire world. Manipuri Vaisnavas are very famous in Vaisnava society. In Vrindavana and Navadvipa there are many temples constructed by the king of Manipura. Some of our devotees belong to the Manipura state. The Krishna consciousness movement, therefore, can be well spread in the state of Manipura by the cooperative efforts of the Krishna conscious devotees."

Sri Govinda Ji Temple in Imphal is the centre of Vaishnava culture in Manipur. Sri Govinda Ji is the ultimate object of love and devotion for people throughout Manipur. There is an amazing pastime about how Sri Govinda Ji manifested from a sacred jackfruit tree in Kaina, to His great devotee King Bhagya Chandra. Most merciful Sri Govinda Ji continues to bestow His darshans upon everyone since hundreds of years.

The exquisitely beautiful Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra at ISKCON Imphal, is a highly revered temple of North-East India, located on the banks of the Imphal River. This temple was established by His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami (Dr. T.D. Singh), a Visionary Scientist & Saint for the Modern Scientific Age and Founding Director of The Bhaktivedanta Institute, upon the instruction of his spiritual master A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami (1937-2006) appeared at Thoubal, a tiny scenic village in the remote interiors of Manipur about an hour from Imphal. The beloved disciples of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj have built a beautiful temple, Sri Sri Radha Damodara, in his memory at Thoubal near his birthplace.

The worship of Lord Vishnu gained prominence in Manipur in the 15th century, during the reign of King Kyamba. The philosophy taught by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu was first introduced in the 17th century by five disciples of the great devotee Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura. The Vaishnava songs of Narottama Dasa Thakura are still sung throughout Manipur. In the early 18th century, the powerful king Garibniwaj embraced the worship of the Personality of Godhead in the form of Lord Ramacandra. But the wave of devotion that turned the entire kingdom towards Krishna consciousness took place during the reign of Garibniwaj's grandson Rajarsi Bhagya Candra.

There are several ancient, important Vaishnava temples in Imphal and across rest of Manipur including Jackfruit Tree Temple at Kaina, Sri Gopinath Temple, Sri Advaita Acarya Temple, Lord Nrsimhadeva Temple, Sri Vijoy Govinda Temple, Sri Nityananda Prabhu Temple, Sri Rama Temple, Hanuman Temple, Sri Sri Radha Madan Mohan ji Temple and Sri Krishna Temple.

"Manipur has been an historic place for thousands of years. Arjuna married the daughter of the Manipur king, and his son became the King. You are, therefore, descending from the original Kshatriyas. Now you bring the knowledge of Bhagavad-Gita, revive Manipur's Kshatriyism and save Vaishnavism. For this purpose of preaching in Manipur I can go in any condition of life. I have great respect for Manipur, which was a Kshatriya kingdom long before Arjuna. You can do it, you are educated and a devotee, and we shall all help you.

That is wanted. Everything can be achieved by bhakti. Make a Manipur temple like Vrindavana and Navadvipa. The people there have to be a little educated in the right line, and then the whole Manipur people will support you. If you make arrangements, then whenever you say, I shall go there.” (Letter dated January 24, 1977 by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to Sriman Swarupa Damodar das Brahmachari).

Lord Jagannatha Rathayatra, Gaura Purnima and Sri Krishna Janmastami Festivals are celebrated in a grand way throughout Manipur. During Jagannatha Rathayatra in June/July, practically every household takes part enthusiastically and brings their utsava deities, Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva and Subhadra for the Rathayatra.

The Land of Jewels: Legends describe that millions of years ago Lord Siva and his consort Parvati danced together in Manipur while the many-hooded divine serpent Ananta Sesa illuminated the dance arena with the jewels from his crowns. Enchanted by the celestial music that accompanied the dance, Ananta Sesa swayed back and forth, unaware that the jewels from his splendid crowns were falling upon the earth. The beautiful site of this pastime became known as Manipur, "the land of jewels."

The world famous Loktak Lake is about 2 hours from Imphal. Sangai, an endemic and endangered subspecies of brow-antlered deer is found only in Manipur. The modern game of Polo, locally known as Sagol Kangjei (Manipuri Polo) originated from Manipur.

Manipur is in North-East India. Imphal is its capital. Imphal is well connected by regular daily flights from Kolkata, Guwahati, Delhi and Agartala. Mizoram and Nagaland are the bordering states. Myanmar (Burma) is in the East and its border is 120 km from Imphal.

Temples in and around Imphal:

1. Sri Govinda Ji Temple
2. Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra - ISKCON Imphal Mani Mandir
3. Kaina Jackfruit Tree Temple
4. Toubul village - Birthplace of HH Bhakti Swarup Damodar Swami
5. Sri Gopinath Temple
6. Sri Advaita Acarya Temple
7. Lord Nrsimhadeva Temple
8. Sri Bijoy Govinda Temple
9. Sri Nityananda Prabhu Temple
10. Sri Rama Temple
11. Hanuman Temple
12. Sri Madan Mohan ji Temple
13. Sri Krishna Temple

1. Sri Govinda Ji Temple

Sri Govinda Ji Temple is the epicentre of Vaishnava culture in Manipur. Temple is located in the heart of Imphal. The presiding deities are Sri Govinda Ji, Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra and Sri Sri Gaura Nitai. There is also a replica of Radha Kunda, Shyama Kunda and Giri Govardhana. The temple has a large hall for congregational Kirtans and Krishna Consciousness discourses. The king of Manipur, a Meitei monarch, Maharaja Jai Singh or Bhagya Chandra Karta (1748-1799), was an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna. He spread Vaishnavism in Manipur State after his grandfather Pamheiba made Vaishnavism the official religion, and for creating a unified Manipur.

Lord Krishna personally instructed Bhagya Chandra in a dream to carve His deity from a sacred Jackfruit tree at Kaina and enshrine Him in a temple. Accordingly, he formally initiated the carving of the deity of the Lord Govindaji, in 1776, which was then completed and consecrated in November 1779 on the full moon day in a temple built by him in his palace. Upon the instruction of Lord Krishna, King Bhagya Chandra initiated Rasa Lila. In this dance form, the typical Manipuri skirt called Potloi, that the dancers wear, was revealed to Bhagya Chandra in a dream, when Lord Krishna appeared before him wearing a similar dress.

Pastime - How Sri Govinda Ji manifested?

Bhagya Candra ascended the throne in 1759, but in 1762 the Burmese, acting in concert with his envious maternal uncle, invaded Manipur. The king, with his queen and a few attendants, fled to the neighbouring state of Ahom, now known as Assam. The King of Ahom, King Rajesvara, had heard of Bhagya Candra's virtues and was pleased to receive him. They became close friends, and Rajesvara arranged for Bhagya Candra to stay in the vicinity of the royal palace.

But Bhagya Candra's crafty uncle wrote a letter to the king saying that the person taking refuge at his court was an imposter, not the great Bhagya Candra. The uncle advised the king of Ahom to destroy him. The message influenced King Rajesvara. Though not entirely persuaded, he began treating Bhagya Candra with suspicion. The real Bhagya Candra was said to have supernatural powers. So finally, on the advice of senior ministers, King Rajesvara reluctantly devised a test: In a public arena, Bhagya Candra, unarmed, was to catch and tame a wild elephant.

Confronted with this humanly impossible task, King Bhagya Candra prayed to Lord Krishna for guidance. Lord Krishna then appeared to him in a dream and advised him to enter the arena with a garland and japa beads in hand. Victory, Lord Krishna told him, was assured. In the future, the Lord said, Bhagya Candra would be the sole king of Manipur. Upon regaining the kingdom, he should install a Krishna deity. The deity, Govindaji, should be carved from a certain old jackfruit tree growing on the slopes of a hill known as Kaina and the physical features of the deity should match those the king was seeing now. After installing the Deity, the Lord Krishna said, the king should arrange for the performance of a rasa-lila, in which the deity should be worshiped with songs and dances. The Lord enabled Bhagya Candra to envision in detail the kinds of dress the dancers should wear and the manner in which the songs and dances should be composed.

The next morning, crowds waited on rooftops and treetops to see the fate of the supposed king of Manipur. Bhagya Candra solemnly entered the arena, holding the garland and japa beads and chanting the holy name of Lord Krishna. The elephant charged from a distance, but as it neared Bhagya Candra it slowed down and then knelt before him. The elephant seemed as though struck repeatedly by some unseen enemy. King Bhagya Candra alone could see Lord Krishna sitting atop the elephant's head like a mahout. And to that Lord the king offered the garland from his hand. The king then mounted the elephant and rode triumphantly through the cheering crowds.



King Bhagya Candra praying for Lord Krishna's guidance

Thoroughly convinced, King Rajesvara profusely apologized and offered his full assistance. He supplied men and arms to help King Bhagya Candra win back his kingdom. After an arduous trek from Ahom through the jungles, Bhagya Candra returned with his forces to Manipur and regained the throne. He restored the kingdom to normalcy and set about to consolidate its small kingdoms into one state, while still preserving cultural diversity.

For some reason, some say because of repeated Burmese invasions, Bhagya Candra did not at once install the deity of Govindaji. But one day a tribal woman appeared at the gates of his palace, insisting on having an audience with the king. She bore a message from someone even higher than him. Bhagya Candra granted a private audience. The tribal woman told the king that while she was cultivating vegetables in her field a young boy came before her and began playing tricks. He won her affection and asked her to convey to the king a message: "He had made a promise, but now he was neglecting it, and the boy was very angry."

The king at once understood that the boy was Krishna Himself. He realized his lapse and immediately came to Kaina to find the Jackfruit tree to carve the deity which Lord Krishna had spoken. However, with the first strike of an axe the tree started bleeding, forcing him to stop cutting. He appeased the tree by offering worship, following which he uprooted the tree without trouble and had it carried away to carve the deity.

The uprooted jackfruit tree from Kaina was transported by floating it along the Iril River to his capital Langthaband. The king appointed expert sculptors to carve the Deity. He described to the sculptors precisely how the Lord should look, according to the vision he had seen, and advised them also to consult the descriptions in Srimad-Bhagavatam. The sculptors carved a beautiful image, and when the king saw it he acknowledged that the form was superb. But it did not, he said, match his vision. By the king's order, the Deity was named Sri Vijaya Govindaji and opulently installed. An elderly uncle of the king became the priest of the Deity. The king then ordered the sculptors to carve another deity. They began again, but again the deity differed from the form the king had envisioned. This

happened totally seven times. Each time, the king had the deity opulently installed in a different temple and told the sculptors to try again.

The first deity was installed at Bijoy Govinda temple at Sagalband; the second deity was installed at the Sri Gopinath Temple at Ningthoukhong in Bishnupur district; the third deity at Nityananda Temple at Khwai Lamabam Leikai in Imphal; the fourth deity at Sri Madan Mohan at Oinam Thingel, Imphal. The fifth deity was installed at Anuprabhu at Navadvipa at Nadia of West Bengal. The sixth deity carved from the roots of the tree, was installed at Lamangdong, about 20 km from Imphal, and came to be known as "Advaita Prabhu" or "Lamangdong Advaita".

The sculptors were getting anxious as not much was left of the tree. At last they carved a Deity that the king said matched his vision precisely. With joyous festivities the Deity was installed, and from the very beginning He was revered as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The king himself, his court, his entire state all were dedicated to Govinda Ji. Skilfully, the king introduced all the features of traditional worship of Lord Krishna as taught by the followers of Lord Caitanya. By his own example he inspired his people in devotional service to Govinda Ji. Devotion to Govinda Ji became the focus of the spiritual and cultural life of Manipur. The people became Vaishnavas, devotees of Krishna. They expressed their devotion with a special Manipuri spirit. They were Manipuri Vaishnavas, and they are still known as such till this day.

The First Rasa-Lila: *After the installation of Govindaji, yet to be fulfilled was Lord Krishna's order that the king arrange for the performance of rasa-lila. The king now set about this in earnest. He engaged various experts to compose the music, design the costumes, conceive the dances, and so on. In all matters, the king himself gave guidance.*

The dance was not to be merely an artistic performance. Rather, the dance was to be done for the pleasure of the Deity and the spiritual upliftment of the audience. Lord Krishna's pastimes take place on the highest level of spiritual devotion, and the performance had to convey the pastimes of the Lord in all their purity. Grace, delicacy, chastity, and deep spiritual feeling all these were to be hallmarks of the rasa-lila.

The rasa-lila was to be performed in a "rasa-mandala" specially constructed for the Deity, Lord Govinda Ji. Govinda Ji Himself would be in the centre of the rasa-lila. But as yet there was no Deity of the Lord's consort, Srimati Radharani. Who then would play her role? For the pleasure of Lord Govinda Ji, the king selected his own daughter, the young and beautiful princess Bimbavati. And the king himself became one of the mrdanga drummers for the satisfaction of the Lord. The rasa-lila was held in November 1779, on the night of the full moon. By all accounts it was splendidly performed. Over the years, the rendering of rasa-lila through dance and song developed into a highly refined art, and till this day it is celebrated as a sacred tradition in Manipur. And whenever it is performed, a prayer is made to Govinda Ji on behalf of Maharaja Bhagya Candra.



Rasa-lila performance for pleasure of Sri Govinda Ji in Manipuri dress (Potloi) as instructed by Lord Krishna Himself to His adherent devotee King Bhagya Candra

Perfecting a Life of Devotion: Princess Bimbavati herself was so overcome with devotion that she renounced the world and spent the rest of her life serving Lord Krishna and singing His holy names. She became famous as Sija Lairoibi, meaning "the princess who owned the Lord." The golden deity of Radharani at the Govinda Ji temple was later made in her likeness.

After ruling for 39 years, till 1798, King Bhagya Candra decided to retire from political life. With his sons, queens and several hundred associates, he left the kingdom for what in those days was a most difficult journey - a pilgrimage on foot to the Ganges at Murshidabad, in what is now West Bengal. The king handed over the state of Manipur to his eldest son, Labanyacandra and spent the rest of his days in a life of detachment and devotion. He passed away in 1799 at Murshidabad. There his body was cremated, near the tomb of the great Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura. The brahmanas of those days gave him the title "Rajarsi," meaning a sage in the form of a king. By the king's will, a portion of his ashes was brought back to Manipur and buried at the royal cremation ground, and another portion was brought to Navadvipa, the abode of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.



Sri Govinda Ji Temple in Imphal, Manipur



Their Lordships Sri Govinda Ji



Their Lordships Sri Govinda Ji



Sri Sri Krishna Balarama



Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra



Sri Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda at the Govinda Ji Temple premises



Giri Govardhana at Sri Govinda Ji Temple



Giri Govardhana



Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple at Govinda Ji Temple



Sri Govinda Ji Temple



Devotees making garlands for the pleasure of Their Lordships



Magnificent hall to have Kirtans and devotional discourses at Govinda Ji Temple



Temple bell

2. Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra - ISKCON Imphal Mani Mandir

Srila Prabhupada knew of Manipur's rich Vaishnava heritage. He knew of its people's kshatriya lineage, their adoption of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, and their beautiful devotional arts. He desired to see Manipur's Vaishnava culture revitalized in a scientific way so that it could become an ideal Vaishnava state, a state that could represent Bhagavata Culture to the entire world. For this purpose he was desirous of visiting Manipur but because of ill health and the difficulty of getting an inner line permit for the foreign devotees, his visit to Manipur did not materialize. In 1977, in order to fulfil Prabhupada's desire of revitalizing Vaishnava culture in Manipur, HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami Maharaja opened an ISKCON temple in Imphal, the capital city of Manipur. The temple is now known as the Mani Mandir or Jewelled Temple. Anyone who visits the temple is immediately awestruck by its magnificence. The presiding Deities are Sri Sri Radha-Krishnachandra, along with Srimati Lalita and Srimati Vishakha, Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai and Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva and Lady Subhadra. A glance of the Deities' delicate beauty instantaneously gives one a glimpse of the transcendental love between Radha and Krishna. The Manimandir is inspirational and truly a place where divine love and beauty reign supreme. During the deity installation, Maharaja arranged for 108 brahmins to chant the entire 18,000 verses of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Near Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra Temple is **Bhaktivedanta Institute Mission Higher Secondary School**, a co-educational English medium school founded by HH Bhaktiswarupa Damodara Swami popular known as Dr.T.D Singh in 1982. Dr.T.D Singh is popularly known as a Saint – Scientist for his outstanding contribution in the field of science and Spirituality. The main objective of establishing this school by His Holiness is to impact value oriented education in youth to make them strong pillars of the nation. "Education with Scientific Temper and Spiritual quest".



Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra - ISKCON Imphal Mani Mandir



Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra - ISKCON Imphal Mani Mandir



Exquisitely beautiful, Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra at ISKCON Imphal



Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra



Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra



Sri Sri Gaura Nitai



Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra



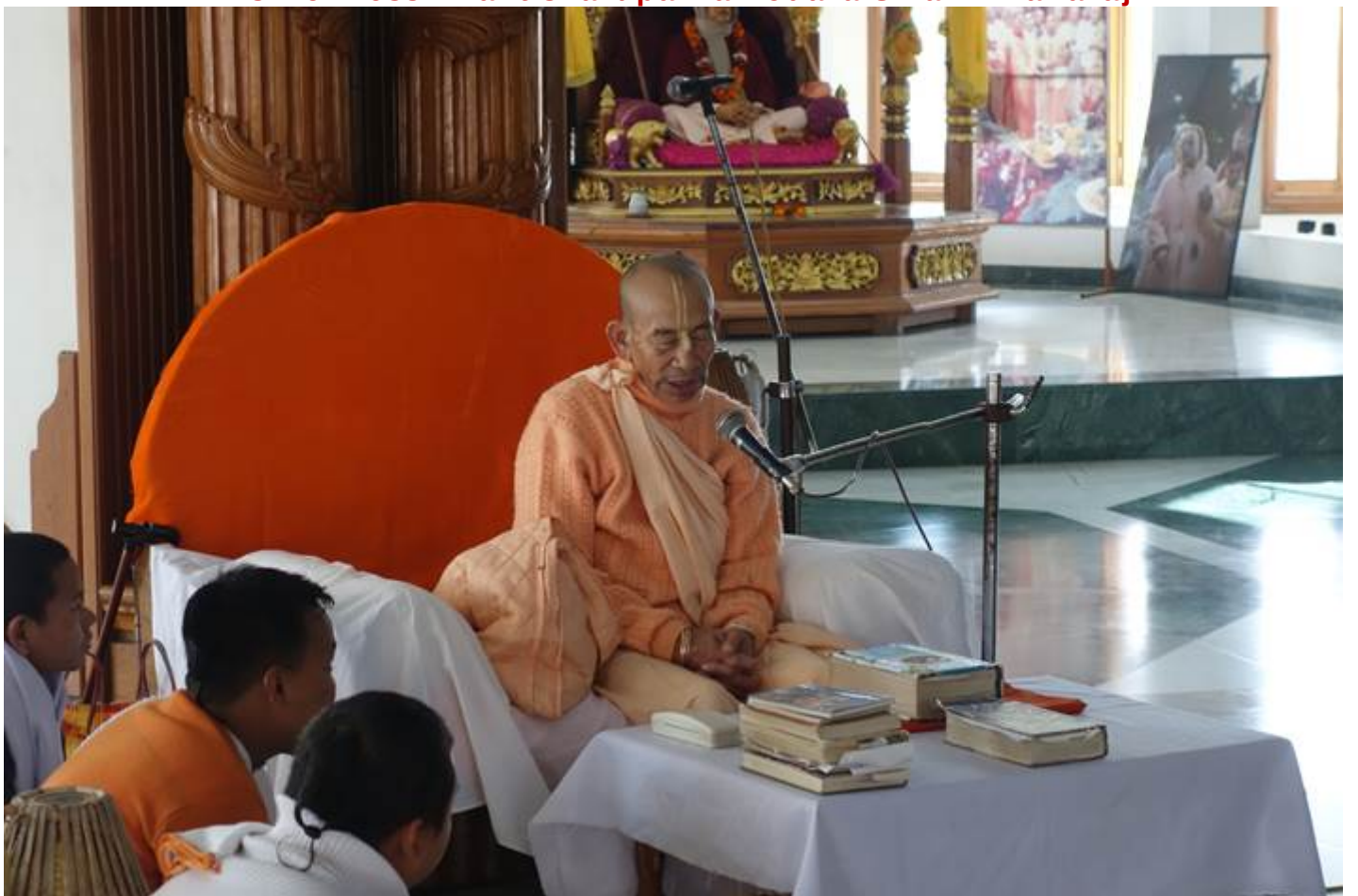
Lord Nrsimhadeva at ISKCON Imphal



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-acarya of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)



His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj



Transcendentalists giving Bhagavad-Gita class in Manipuri



Devotees at Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra Temple



Ecstatic Kirtan at Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra Temple



Manipuri devotional Kirtan for pleasure of Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra



Diorama of Lord Krishna's pastimes



Manipuri devotional performances



Manipuri devotional performances



Manipuri devotional performances



Bhaktivedanta Institute Mission Higher Secondary School, Imphal



Staff at Bhaktivedanta Institute Mission Higher Secondary School, Imphal



Devotional performances by the students of Bhaktivedanta Institute Mission Higher Secondary School



Devotional performances by the Manipuri kids

3. Kaina Jackfruit Tree Temple

Kaina is a small hillock 29 km from Imphal on the Imphal-Yariripok road. From a sacred jackfruit tree here at Kaina, King Bhagya Chandra carved the deity of Sri Govinda Ji, as per the instructions he got from Lord Krishna Himself. Detailed pastime how Sri Govinda Ji manifested has been described above.



Kaina Jackfruit Tree Temple



Sacred Jackfruit Tree



Photo of Sri Govinda Ji in the small temple behind the Jackfruit Tree



Sacred kunda near the Jackfruit Tree



Dense forest around near the Jackfruit Tree in Kaina



The tribal woman who informed King Bhagya Chandra that while she was cultivating vegetables in her field a young boy came before her and began playing tricks. He won her affection and asked her to convey to the king a message: "He had made a promise, but now he was neglecting it, and the boy was very angry." Bhagya Chandra at once understood that the boy was Krishna Himself. He realized his lapse and immediately came to Kaina to find the Jackfruit tree to carve the deity which Lord Krishna had spoken.

4. Toubul village - Birthplace of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodar Swami

Toubul is a tiny scenic village in the remote interiors of Manipur, about an hour from Imphal. This is birthplace of His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami (Dr. T.D. Singh; 1937-2006). HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami was a Visionary Scientist & Saint for the Modern Scientific Age, and Founding Director of The Bhaktivedanta Institute. The beloved disciples of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj have built a beautiful temple, Sri Sri Radha Damodara, in Maharaj's memory at Toubul near his birthplace.



Exact birthplace of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj at Toubul village in Manipur



Sri Sri Radha Damodara Temple established by the beloved disciples of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj at Toubul village



Sri Sri Radha Damodara



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Srila Prabhupada and HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami



Lord Krishna's beloved cows at the Goshala of Sri Sri Radha Damodara Temple, Toubul



Goshala at Sri Sri Radha Damodara Temple, Toubul



Picturesque views from Sri Sri Radha Damodara Temple at Toubul, Manipur



Local farmers at Toubul

HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami: From the very beginning of Maharaja's spiritual life in ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada chose to show him special attention and favour. Seeing Maharaja's dual qualifications as a Vaishnava scientist and a Manipuri Vaishnava, Srila Prabhupada personally trained him in spiritual science and gave great importance to his scientific work, and also instructed him to strengthen Krishna consciousness in Manipur. He was dear to the devotees for his saintly qualities and his powerful *sankirtana*, and for his disciples he served as their spiritual father and eternal friend. Srila Prabhupada gave special attention to Sripada Maharaja, even up to his last days in Vrindavana in November of 1977. He would sometimes refer to Sripada Maharaja affectionately as, "*Our Dr. Svarupa Damodara*" and "*our scientist, Svarupa Damaodara*", and there were hours of conversations between Prabhupada and Sripada Maharaja. HH Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Maharaja dedicated his life to fulfilling Srila Prabhupada's order to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world especially through the medium of the Bhaktivedanta Institute. Maharaja tirelessly worked to publish literature, develop relationships with leading scientists and organize elaborate conferences that brought the scientific community together to hear the message of Krishna Consciousness in a language they could appreciate. While doing that, he simultaneously established Krishna Consciousness in his native State of Manipur. Even at his advanced age, he was traveling the globe attending conferences, meeting top scientists, preaching at ISKCON temples and programs. He left this mortal world in 2006 in Calcutta, Srila Prabhupada's place of birth.

Rendering service to the person *Bhagavata*, or the pure servant of God, is described throughout the Vedic literature as being more effective and more pleasing to the Lord than rendering service to the Supreme Lord directly. The person *Bhagavata* comes in the line of a genuine disciplic succession from the Lord, and through the disciplic succession, the divine principle is transmitted to the humble spiritual aspirant. HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami, also known as Sripada Maharaja, rendered sincere and loving service to his spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, who belonged to the spiritual lineage of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradaya*. Sripada Maharaja was thus an ideal example of *bhagavata-sevarpanam* - offering service unto the *Bhagavata*.

Brief Life Sketch of His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami

In the picturesque valley of Manipur, on *Odana-shasti* day, in a village known as Toubul, a beautiful child was born on Dec 9, 1937, to Sri Yogendra Singh and Srimati Keinahanbi Devi. Being Vaishnavas, they named their child Damodara, one of the holy names of Lord Krishna. Sri Yogendra Singh was a devotional singer in the *Nata Sankirtana* tradition. From the very moment of Damodara's appearance in this world, his father, Sri Yogendra filled his ears with the devotional sounds of the holy names and pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Srimati Keinahanbi Devi, Sri Yogendra's faithful wife and Damodara's loving mother, also provided her son with a spiritual atmosphere of remembrance of, and reverence for Lord Krishna.

The Second World War greatly affected the quiet and peaceful valley of Manipur. It created many difficulties for the people of Manipur and forced Damodara to face a series of unfortunate incidents. In the early summer of 1945, the concluding phase of World War II wreaked its havoc on the villages of Manipur. Damodara was a mere child of seven years when circumstances compelled his family to uproot from their humble and peaceful valley home. Damodara's father brought his family to a barrack on the bank of the Yangoi River, which runs into Loktak Lake, in order to shelter them from the bombs and other dangers of warfare. Not long after relocating to the barrack, Damodara's father abruptly passed away of typhoid.

The war eventually came to an end, and shortly thereafter, by the will of providence, Damodara was separated from his mother and two sisters and went to live with an uncle. His uncle was very poor and struggling to pay even the medical expenses of his daughter who was seriously ill. Although only a child, young Damodara could see his uncle's helpless economic situation and not wanting to be a burden on anyone, Damodara insisted that he be allowed to live alone. His uncle was reluctant, yet due to his financial condition he was obliged to consent.

At the age of twelve, Damodara was living on his own, depending on the income from the cultivation of the paddy field left to him by his father. Working in the fields to maintain himself, Damodara could not find the time to devote to his studies. Young Damodara faced all these difficulties with great courage and determination. He was never heard to complain about anything.

A couple of years later, by the loving effort of Sri Yadav Singh, Damodara's primary school teacher, arrangements were made for Damodara to be taken care of by a distant uncle, Sri Kerani Singh. Sri Kerani Singh was a colleague of Sri Yadav Singh and he showed Damodara much affection and took care of his every need. At that time, being fully provided for, Damodara was able to resume his studies. His teachers found him to be a bright, diligent, sincere, humble and dedicated student. They all loved him dearly.

When Damodara was 14 years old he became seriously ill with typhoid. The village physicians unanimously declared that he would soon die. But his guardian prayed daily for his recovery by reciting the *Dashavatara-stotra*, a prayer to Lord Sri Krishna's ten incarnations. After fasting for 40 days and drinking only whey, Sripada Maharaja miraculously recovered.

From his early childhood Damodara was very attracted to hearing the pastimes of the Lord. On one occasion he spent the entire night watching the Divine *Rasa Lila* dance of Krishna and His *gopis* performed in traditional Manipuri style and consequently missed his final examination of 5th standard mathematics, which took place the following day. He would also regularly participate in the Deity worship of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna, Sri Sri Gaura Nitai and Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra who were installed in his village's local temple.

Being a diligent student, in 1957, Damodara passed his matriculation exam in the first division. Damodara then started college at D. M. College, one of the most prestigious colleges in Imphal, Manipur. He obtained his senior secondary education in 1959, and graduated with First Class Honours in Chemistry in 1961. He later acquired his Bachelors of Science degree in Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology in 1963 and further obtained his Master of Technology degree in Pharmaceutical Science from Calcutta University in 1964. Shortly thereafter, Damodara was awarded an overseas scholarship from the Ministry of Education, Government of India, to further his studies in the United States. In the 1960s, for someone from the small state of Manipur, India, to make it all the way to the United States on scholarships was almost impossible. Yet by the mercy of the Supreme Lord, Sripada Maharaja won an overseas scholarship from India's ministry of education.

A Momentous Meeting with A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada: In 1969, Damodara was a student at the University of California, doing his Ph.D. research in Physical Organic Chemistry. One day, the secretary of the chemistry department handed a telegram from India to Damodara informing him that his mother had passed away. He had not seen her for more than 4 years and was unaware that his mother was suffering from any ill health, so the news was unexpected. He wanted to return to India in order to perform her *shraddha* or funeral ceremony, but he had no money for his flight to India. However, he managed to borrow some funds from the University and made arrangements to leave for India. Just before leaving, he received a letter from his uncle, Sri Kerani Singh, advising him not to return to India for the *shraddha* ceremony. His uncle wrote, *"Being a Vaishnava, you should lament neither for the living nor for the dead." His uncle reminded Damodara that the body is temporary but the soul is eternal. Sooner or later there will be a time for everyone to leave this temporary body, as stated in the Bhagavad-Gita. He instructed Damodara not to waste any time worrying about the temporary body, but to concentrate on his studies and return to India after graduation and that he would arrange for the shraddha ceremony.*

So, Damodara cancelled his ticket to India but at the same time began to lose interest in his studies. He spent the succeeding nights meditating on the flickering nature of this material world. In life, incidents that act as a catalyst for introspection and inquiry about the purpose of life happen to individuals by the inconceivable mercy of the Supreme Lord. In this regard Srila Prabhupada states, *"...it is a special reasoning power to inquire 'Why am I suffering'? This is special reasoning. ...Bhagavad-Gita says, out of many thousands, someone may develop this reasoning power... When there is some impetus to awaken this reasoning power, it is called brahma jijnasa."* This is confirmed in the first verse of the Vedanta Sutra, which asserts that this human form of life is meant for asking the questions of what is the Absolute Truth and how to solve the problems of suffering.

Hearing the sad news of his mother's passing, Damodara's friend, Dr Ravindra Pratap Rao, came to see him. Dr Rao suggested that they go for a drive. They drove along the Laguna Beach and upon arrival began to take a walk. While walking along the coast they saw some ISKCON devotees chanting *Harinam Sankirtana*. Out of curiosity, they followed the devotees to find out their destination. One of the devotees noticed them following the *Sankirtana* party and stopped to invite Damodara and Dr Rao to the local ISKCON temple in Laguna Canyon. The devotee explained to them that every day they were performing chanting of Lord Krishna's Holy Names and partaking *prasadam* offered to Lord Krishna. He asked them to visit the temple and join them in the singing, dancing and feasting programs.

The following day, Dr Rao went to the temple alone and on his return reported to Damodara that the devotees were wonderful and everything in the temple was pleasant. Everyday Dr Rao urged Damodara to accompany him to the temple. Damodara, citing his

academic pressure, declined each time. One day Dr Rao told him that he had learned that Srila Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON, was staying in Los Angeles and he said, "Let us go and see Srila Prabhupada in Los Angeles tomorrow." However, Damodara refused, saying that he was extremely busy in his academic work and could not go with him. Nevertheless, Damodara encouraged Dr Rao and requested him to report about the visit. Dr Rao drove to Los Angeles and when he reached the temple, because he was a stranger, he was not allowed to see Srila Prabhupada. Dr Rao told Damodara, "I was extremely disappointed. I decided to wait in my car and pray to Lord Sri Krishna. A little later, a devotee came and informed me that Prabhupada wanted to see me. I felt my prayer to Lord Sri Krishna had been heard and immediately went to Srila Prabhupada's room. When Prabhupada saw me, he said, 'You have been sent by Lord Krishna. I have been praying to Lord Krishna to send me at least one Indian boy to help me in my mission. Krishna has sent you to me.'" Dr Rao then again requested Damodara, "Let us go tomorrow to see Srila Prabhupada". Damodara again declined. This incident recurred for a few days - Dr Rao would go and meet Srila Prabhupada and on returning would request Damodara to join him the following day. Damodara would refuse to go and see Srila Prabhupada on the plea that he was busy with his studies.

Finally, one day, Dr Rao presented Damodara with an ultimatum, saying, "If you do not accompany me tomorrow morning to see Srila Prabhupada I will never come and see you again in this lifetime. Our friendship will be finished forever." Damodara was surprised at his friend's seriousness. He did not have a good opinion of the Indian Swamijis in the USA having heard of some of their activities. He wrongly thought that Srila Prabhupada would also be like them. However, out of friendship he decided to accompany Dr Rao the next day. Something similar to this took place before Srila Prabhupada's first meeting with Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura.

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavan jiva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde paya bhakti-lāṭa-bija*

According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate and gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Krishna. By the mercy of both Krishna and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service. (Caitanya Caritamṛta, Madhya 19.151). In this regard, Srila Prabhupada mentions in his purport of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, verse 2.2.30, "A sincere soul is helped by the Lord through meeting a bona-fide spiritual master, the representative of the Lord. By the instruction of such a spiritual master, one gets the seed of bhakti-yoga." This meeting of the prospective disciple and spiritual master is not an ordinary encounter. It is by the divine arrangement of the Supreme Lord.

That night Dr Rao slept in Damodara's apartment. Both of them woke up at 4 am, took their baths and drove to the Los Angeles temple. On the way, Dr Rao revealed that he was going to be initiated that morning by Srila Prabhupada. Damodara, surprised by the sudden change in his friend's life asked, "Will you shave your head? Will you wear a saffron dhoti in the lab?" Dr Rao replied, "It would be my pleasure." Damodara was struck by his friend's determination, enthusiasm and sincerity. He said, "I admire your great courage. You must be blessed by Srila Prabhupada."

They reached the temple in Culver City. Srila Prabhupada was just leaving for his morning walk. He returned from his morning walk after about an hour. He took *darshan* of the Deities and sat on the Vyasasana. Damodara was standing near the Deities, facing Srila Prabhupada, exactly opposite the Vyasasana. Damodara and Srila Prabhupada looked intently at each other's eyes for a few moments. Srila Prabhupada started singing - *Sri-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda sri-advaita gadadhara śrivasadi-gaura-bhakta-vrinda*.

Damodara's mind was captivated by Srila Prabhupada's sweet, melodious and intense devotional singing. Immediately after the song, the initiation ceremony commenced. Dr Rao was initiated and was given the spiritual name, Ramananda Ray Das. Srila Prabhupada went to his room after the ceremony.

Ramananda Ray said to Damodara, "Let us go upstairs to Srila Prabhupada's room and see him." At this time, Damodara became both eager and enthusiastic to see Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada had given the instruction that whenever Ramananda Ray came, he could come to his room. After entering Srila Prabhupada's room they both sat before him. Ramananda Ray introduced Damodara to Srila Prabhupada informing him that Damodara was from Manipur and was currently working on his Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of California, Irvine. Srila Prabhupada was extremely happy and remarked, "Manipuri people are descendants of Babhruvahana, the son of Arjuna. They have been Vaishnavas since the time of the Pandavas and Manipuri kings have established Sri Krishna temples in Vrindavana, Radha Kunda, Navadvipa, etc."

Srila Prabhupada appreciated the Vaishnava culture of Manipur, especially its devotional music and dance based on Sri Krishna's pastimes. Srila Prabhupada then asked Damodara, "Being born in a Vaishnava family, why did you come here, crossing the ocean?" Srila Prabhupada added, *"You, young scholars and students, have come here to the U.S.A. as beggars to beg scientific knowledge and dollars. But I have not come here to beg. I have come here to give the Americans something very valuable, which they do not have - Bhagavata Culture. Why don't you do the same as I am doing? Why are you simply taking? Why don't you also give something?"* This statement by Srila Prabhupada to Damodara, at their very first meeting, affected him greatly and is similar in nature to the statement made by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura to Srila Prabhupada upon their first meeting - The instruction to present Bhagavata Culture to the Western countries.

After that momentous meeting Damodara started visiting Srila Prabhupada in Los Angeles almost every day and after a short period of time he received spiritual initiation. At the time of initiation, Srila Prabhupada gave him the spiritual name, Svarupa Damodara Das. Later, after taking *sannyasa* initiation the prefix *Bhakti* was added and since that time he has been known as Sripada Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja.

The ISKCON Los Angeles temple is known as New Dwarka and it served as Srila Prabhupada's headquarters in the 1970s. While visiting Srila Prabhupada in Los Angeles, Maharaja began to ask him questions on subjects such as *'What is the nature of this material world? What is the nature of life? What is the Absolute Truth?'* Whenever a sincere spiritual aspirant of the Absolute Truth meets a genuine spiritual master, this type of inquiry is natural. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* recounts the story of Vidura meeting his spiritual master, Maitreya Muni, where Vidura similarly inquired from Maitreya Muni about the nature of life and the universe. Srila Prabhupada elaborates on this in his purport of the Bhagavad-Gita verse 7.3, where he says, "There are various grades of men, and out of many thousands, one may be sufficiently interested in transcendental realization to try to know what is the self, what is the body, and what is the Absolute Truth."

Shortly after his initiation, Sriman Ramananda Ray Das moved to Gorakhpur, India and opened an ISKCON centre. Unfortunately he left this world in 1976. Maharaja is eternally grateful to Sriman Ramananda Ray Prabhu for his spiritual friendship and for having introduced him to Srila Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada was eager to have Maharaja scientifically present the *'Life Comes From Life'* paradigm at colleges and universities around the world. Along with the instructions given to Maharaja on how to do this, Srila Prabhupada also gave an instruction to the

manager of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT), “*I have asked him (Maharaja) to tour vigorously throughout the world, lecturing with his other colleagues at all the major institutions and universities. He has drawn up a budget, a copy of which is enclosed, and I immediately sanction this amount. Whatever expenditure he requires, supply him immediately.*” Srila Prabhupada also wanted to send a cultural troupe along with Maharaja to assist him in presenting *Bhagavata Culture*.

For over three decades, Maharaja gave lectures on the spiritually based *Bhagavata Paradigm*. He has spoken on subjects such as Bioethics, Theo biology, Life Comes From Life, and the Synthesis of Science and Religion at many of the world’s most prestigious colleges and universities.

Bhaktivedanta Institute: After completing his Ph.D. in July 1974, Maharaja went to Vrindavana, India to see Srila Prabhupada. In Vrindavana, Srila Prabhupada and Maharaja would take a walk every morning. During those walks Srila Prabhupada would speak to Maharaja about presenting the science and philosophy of Krishna consciousness to the world’s intellectuals. One day after a morning walk, Srila Prabhupada called Maharaja to his room and expressed his desire to start an academic wing of ISKCON. He asked Maharaja to become the director of that academic wing, to which Maharaja humbly replied, “Srila Prabhupada, I have neither the experience nor the knowledge of how to run such an institute. I am completely unqualified.” However, Srila Prabhupada responded by saying, “I will give you all of the instructions required to run the Institute. You simply follow them.” Over the following months Srila Prabhupada and Maharaja worked on the details of forming the Institute. Maharaja suggested the name, “Bhaktivedanta Institute” and Srila Prabhupada agreed to it. Maharaja showed Srila Prabhupada the logo of the Bhaktivedanta Institute that he had designed. Srila Prabhupada liked it very much and instructed Maharaja to add the words *athato brahma jijnasa*, the first verse of the *Vedanta Sutra*, to the top of the logo. In 1975, Srila Prabhupada visited Atlanta on Maharaja’s request and gave extensive instructions to Maharaja and his colleagues about the purpose and functions of the Bhaktivedanta Institute. It was at that time that the Bhaktivedanta Institute was officially registered. In 1976, Srila Prabhupada also appointed Maharaja as ‘ISKCON Minister for Higher Education’.

Srila Prabhupada proceeded to give Maharaja many specific instructions through conversations and letters on how to organize and operate the Institute. Some of these instructions were of a private nature and some of them were not. He sometimes used strong words like ‘fools’ and ‘rascals’ to emphasize the urgent need to save humanity from the materialistic concepts of life propounded by most contemporary scientists. However, he repeatedly stressed that all of the activities of the Institute should be carried out with great skill and politeness and that those engaged in this work should be exemplary in their dealings with scholars. A Vaishnava is very compassionate, as are his activities. Therefore the task set forth by Srila Prabhupada of introducing the *Bhagavata Paradigm* to the scientists was to be done with the utmost respect for their free will. In this regard, Srila Prabhupada frequently emphasized the need for the world’s scientists, intellectuals and leaders to bring a God-centered approach to their research and activities. He felt that if they would do this it would create an immense benefit for the entire society. This understanding given by Srila Prabhupada is emphasized in *Bhagavad-Gita* verse 3.21: “*Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.*”

Maharaja was able to lay the foundation of the Bhaktivedanta Institute under Srila Prabhupada’s guidance. He organized a conference in Vrindavana, India, produced literature and delivered lectures at various institutions. During the initial period of the Institute, Maharaja was working as a research scientist at Emory University and therefore

most of the Institute's major activities were done after Srila Prabhupada's departure from this world.

After Srila Prabhupada's departure, Maharaja underwent a long struggle to establish the Bhaktivedanta Institute's activities. This was primarily due to a lack of financial support. Srila Prabhupada had instructed Maharaja to establish a Bhaktivedanta Institute centre in America. For this purpose, in 1978 Maharaja temporarily rented a house in Atlanta. A little while after this, he shifted the Institute to Philadelphia. There he and the other members produced the bulletin for the Bhaktivedanta Institute. Soon after that the funds required to run the Institute were exhausted and so Maharaja moved to Oklahoma City where he oversaw the running of a motel with the help of Sri Ramanbhai Patel in order to generate funds for the Institute. With the meagre income from the motel he began to work on some publications.

Later, Atreya Rishi Prabhu, who knew Maharaja from prior interactions that the two of them had in the company of Srila Prabhupada, requested Maharaja to move the Bhaktivedanta Institute to San Francisco. Atreya Rishi Prabhu owned a few houses there and out of friendship offered Maharaja the use of one of them. In the early 1980's Maharaja began to give presentations on Bhagavata Culture at various universities in South India. The Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam (TTD), management of the famous Balaji Temple, after being impressed by Srila Prabhupada's mission, donated a piece of land for the Bhaktivedanta Institute at the base of the Tirumala hill. Thereafter, Maharaja opened a Bhaktivedanta Institute branch in Tirupati, which is now the ISKCON Tirupati temple. Thus in India, the Bhaktivedanta Institute was started in Tirupati with the aim of presenting the scientific, theological and philosophical teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* for the welfare of humanity, by the combined effort of TTD and ISKCON. Simultaneously, he began organizing a conference on the *Synthesis of Science and Religion* that was to be held in commemoration of Sri Caitanya's 500th birth anniversary.

In spite of the financial obstacles that Maharaja faced in establishing the Bhaktivedanta Institute, it is now a well-recognized research and educational institution. Maharaja's acceptance of his spiritual master's instructions as his life and soul has caused Srila Prabhupada's vision of introducing the Bhagavata Paradigm to the world's scientists, intellectuals and leaders to become a reality. In the name of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, Maharaja has organized three major conferences and a large number of seminars. He has published two important books on the synthesis of science and religion and numerous other literatures, which have all received wide acceptance from the academic community. As director of the Bhaktivedanta Institute he has interacted with thousands of scholars from around the globe, including many Nobel Laureates and leading scientists.

In North Eastern India, Maharaja has started a network of schools in order to promote the goals of the Institute. Over 4000 students attend these schools and receive a scientific education centred on the spiritual values of the *Bhagavata* tradition. Maharaja has often expressed his gratitude towards those who have helped him in the development of the Bhaktivedanta Institute. Because of their dedicated help, the Institute has managed to become what it is today. He thanks all of those who have directly or indirectly helped to fulfil Srila Prabhupada's earnest desire of a successful Bhaktivedanta Institute.

Srila Prabhupada knew of Manipur's rich Vaishnava heritage. He knew of its people's *kshatriya* lineage, their adoption of *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*, and their beautiful devotional arts. He desired to see Manipur's Vaishnava culture revitalized in a scientific way so that it could become an ideal Vaishnava state, a state that could represent *Bhagavata* Culture to the entire world. For this purpose he was desirous of visiting Manipur but because of ill health and the difficulty of getting an inner line permit for the foreign devotees his visit to Manipur did not materialize. In 1977, in order to fulfil Prabhupada's desire of revitalizing

Vaishnava culture in Manipur, Maharaja opened an ISKCON temple in Imphal, the capital city of Manipur. The temple is now known as the Mani Mandir or Jewelled Temple. Anyone who visits the temple is immediately awestruck by its magnificence. The presiding Deities are Sri Sri Radha- Krishnachandra, along with their attendants Srimati Lalita and Srimati Vishakha, Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai and Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva and Lady Subhadra. A glance of the Deities' delicate beauty instantaneously gives one a glimpse of the divine love between Radha and Krishna. The Manimandir is inspirational and truly a place where divine love and beauty reign supreme. During the Deity installation, Maharaja arranged for 108 Brahmins to chant the entire 18,000 verses of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

The Mani Mandir is the centrepiece of the University of Bhagavata Culture. The University of Bhagavata Culture is an establishment for learning about the deeper meaning of life and the universe. This University is the first of its kind in the world and is guided by the vision of Srila Prabhupada. Students graduating from the University will be qualified to present Bhagavata Culture globally for the benefit of humanity. On many occasions Srila Prabhupada said, "There are innumerable departments of knowledge being presented in the universities, but there is no department of knowledge for understanding the science of God." When the University is complete it will have the following departments: Sukadeva School of Vaishnava Vedanta; Babhruvahana School of Administration; Dhanvantari School of Ayurveda; Chitrangada Women's College; Ranganiketan School of Art and Culture; Bhaktivedanta Institute of Science and Philosophy, and the Vedavyasa Library. As the rector of the University of Bhagavata Culture, Maharaja was invited for the "World Meeting of Rectors and Presidents" organized by the Vatican as part of the Jubilee Celebrations for the new millennium.

Sripada Maharaja was and continues to be a spiritual master, teacher, and guide for thousands of people. Wherever he travelled, his friendship captivated and charmed people of all ages, faiths, and walks of life. His disciples have been touched by his example of dedicating himself completely to the instructions of his spiritual master. Desiring to continue his mission of serving Srila Prabhupada, Sripada Maharaja's disciples are now taking the instructions they received from him as their life and soul.

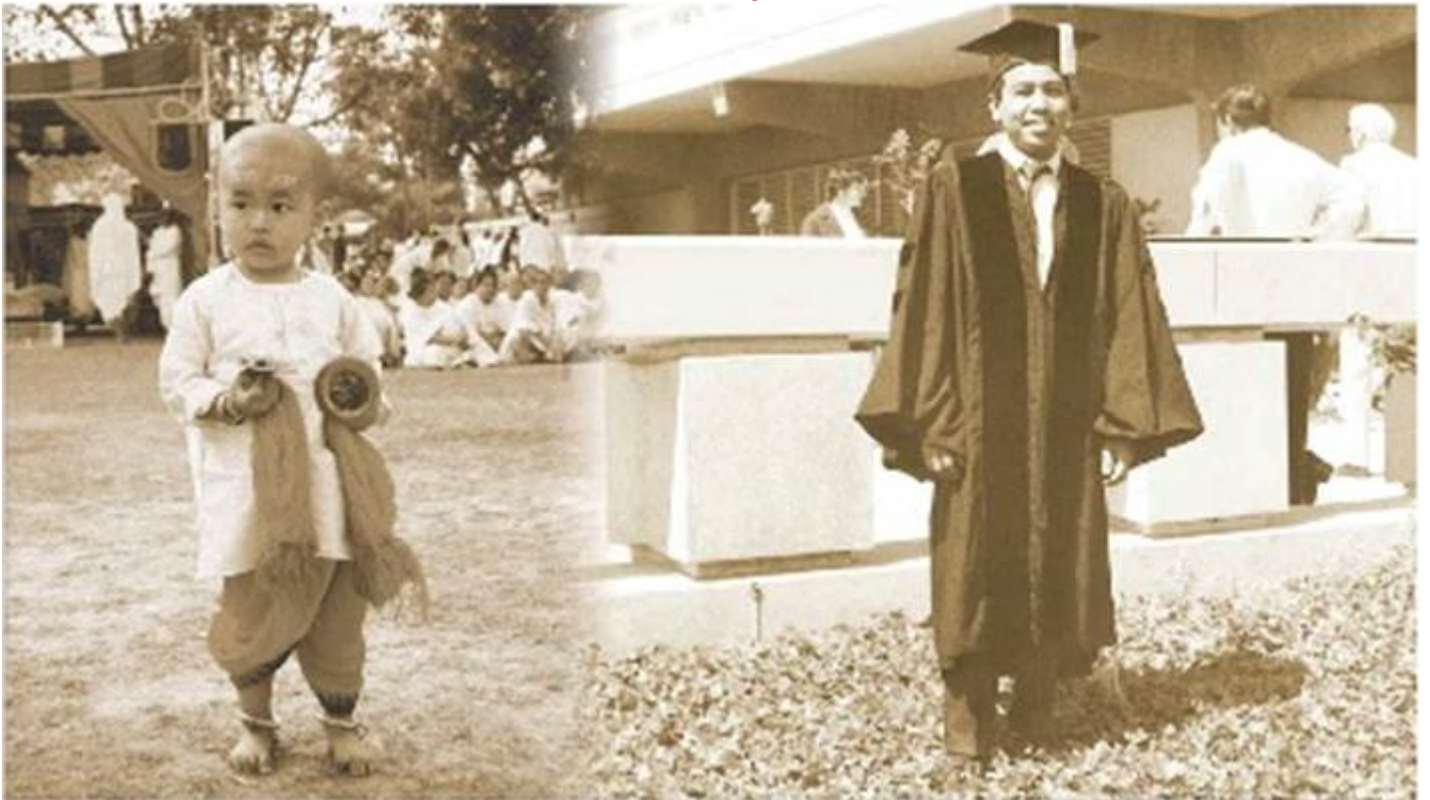
For the last 25 years, Sripada Maharaja organized seminars and interreligious discussion groups around the world. In addition, beginning in early 1980 in Manipur he led annual padayatras (walks) for peace and religious harmony. Sripada Maharaja was a global council member of the United Religions Initiative (URI), an international spiritual parallel of the United Nations. URI is the largest worldwide organization dedicated to spreading peace and understanding among the world's religions.

In the spirit of peace and harmony Srila Prabhupada told Sripada Maharaja, attending him in his last days, that he wanted to start the Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust to bring unity among all Gaudiya Vaishnavas and to aid in the renovation of the ancient Gaudiya temples and holy sites. Sripada Maharaja worked hard to achieve this goal of peace and unity.

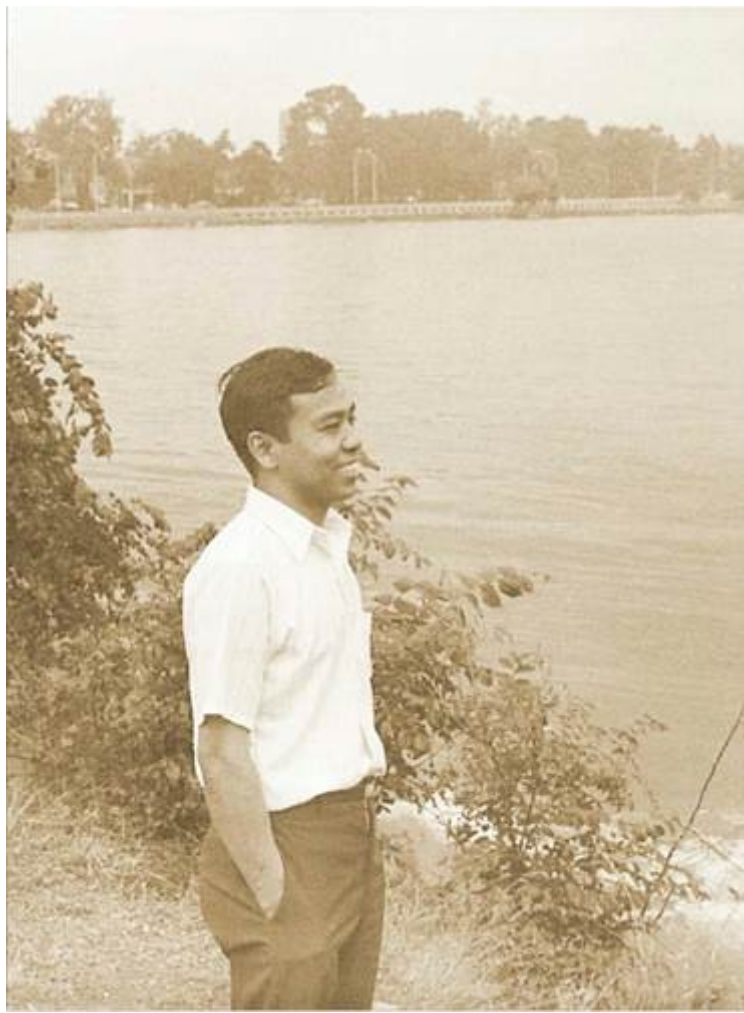
Auspicious Departure: Sripada Maharaja passed from this world on the holy day known as Vijaya Dashami, during the period of the day when Lord Sri Krishna calls the *gopis* for His divine *rasa-lila*. Sripada Maharaja's departure took place in Kolkata, the holy appearance place of his divine master Srila Prabhupada. Kolkata is also the site from which Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura left this world. Sripada Maharaja's purified body was placed in *samadhi* (eternal meditation) at Sri Radha-kunda, Vrindavana.



His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami



HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami



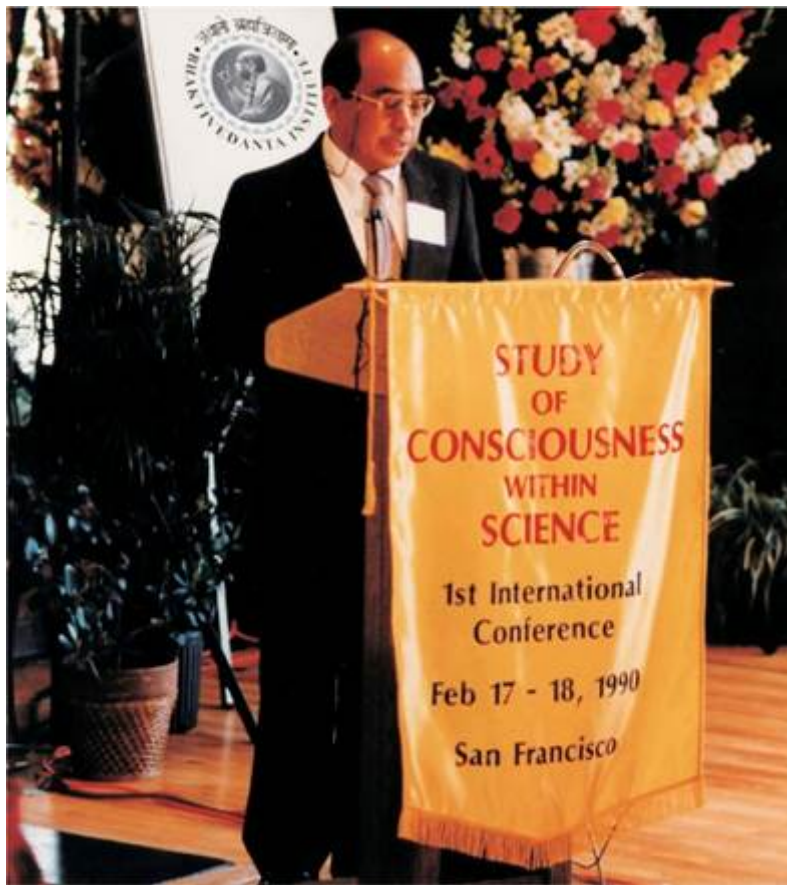
HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami



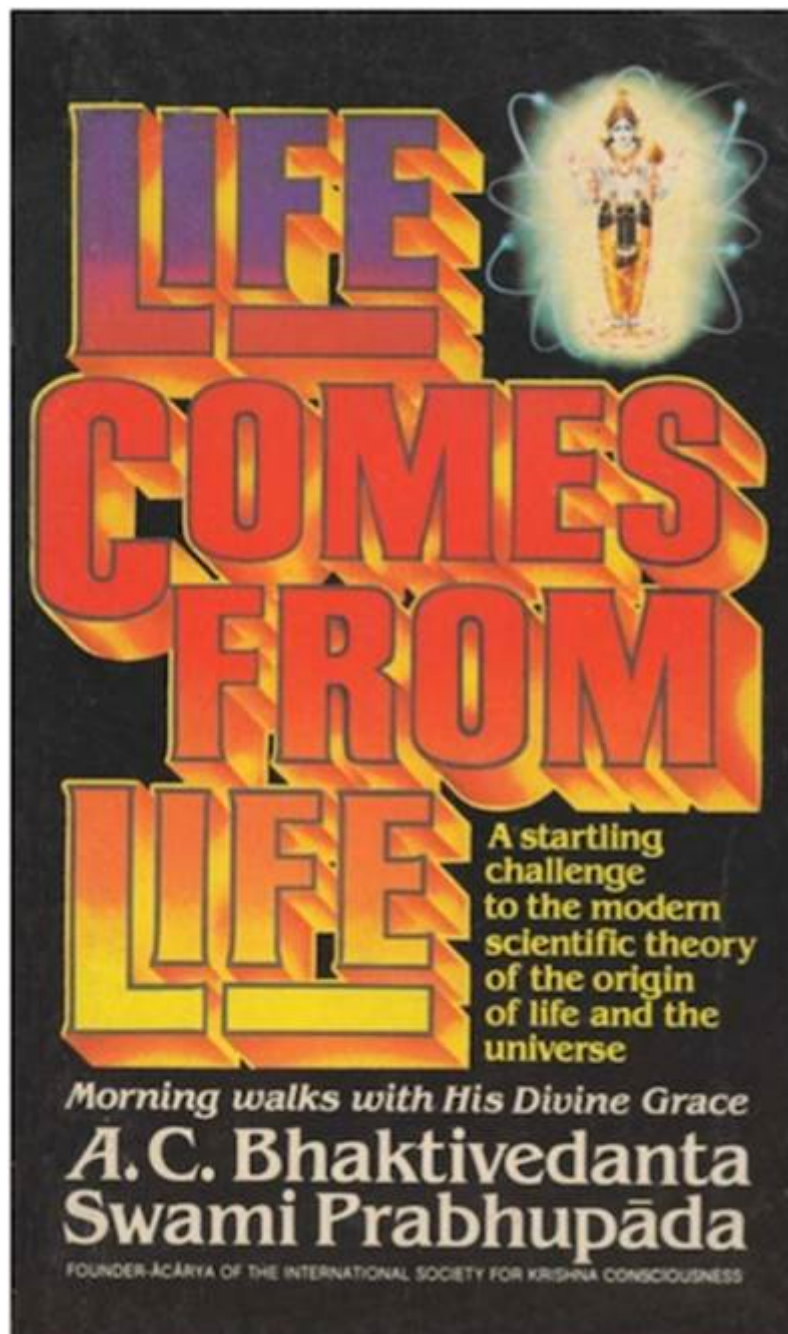
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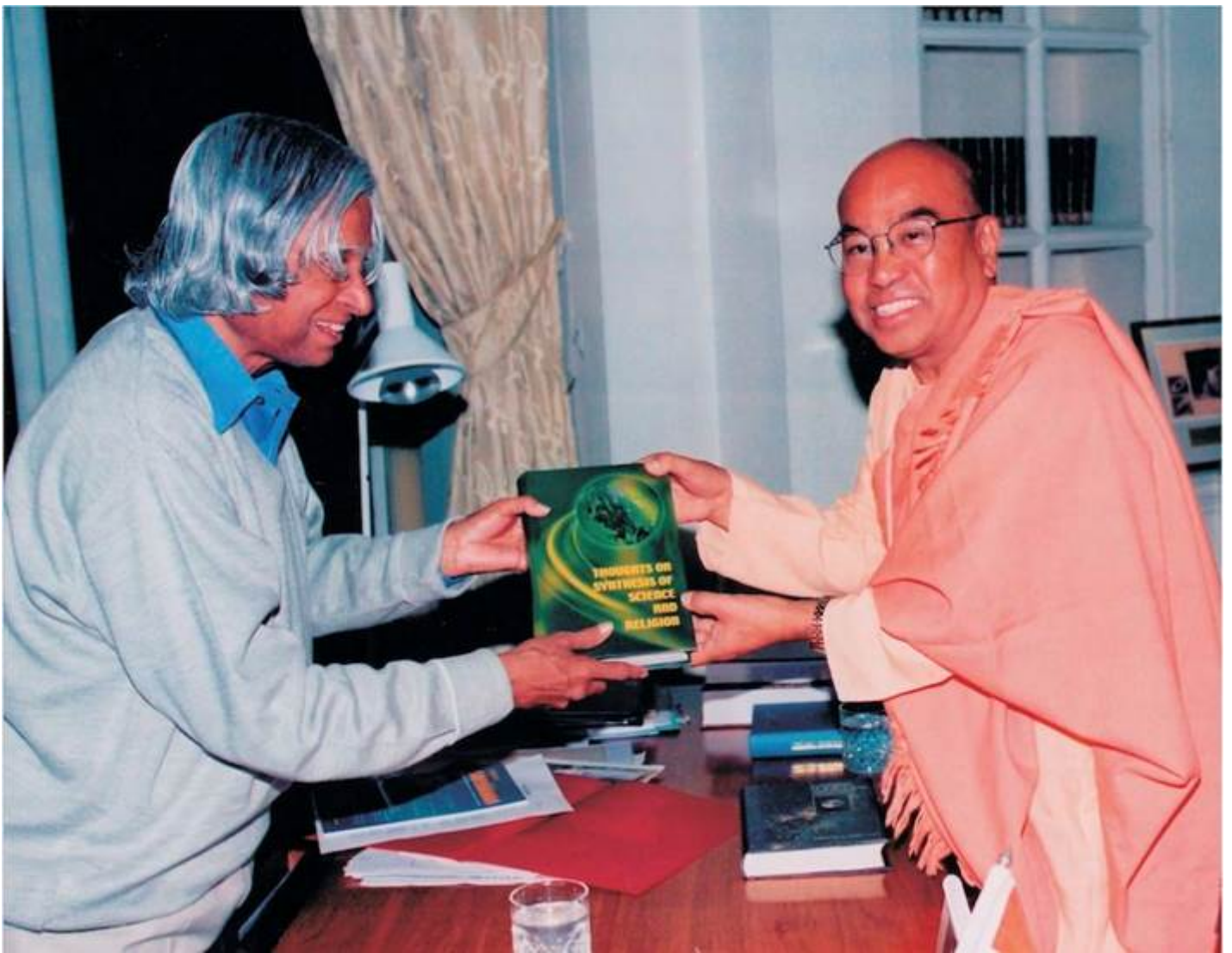
HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami with Srila Prabhupada during the morning walks



HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami



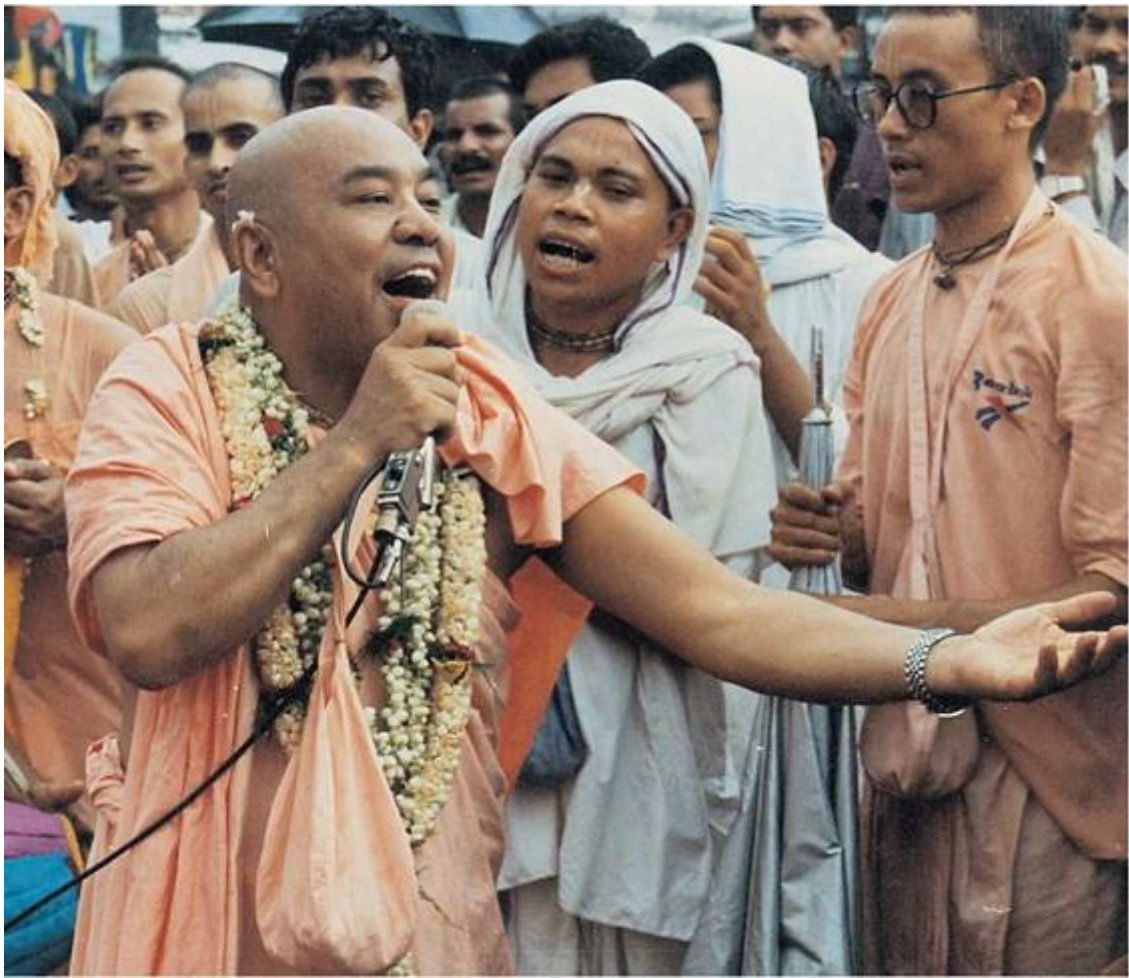
Life Comes from Life book



HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami with A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India



HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami



HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami



Samadhi of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami near Radha Kunda



Samadhi of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami near Radha Kunda

5. Sri Gopinath Temple

Sri Gopinath Temple is located at Ningthoukhong, about 24 km from Imphal. Their lordships are the second deity that were carved from the sacred jackfruit tree. The huge, white coloured temple edifice is well maintained and looks absolutely divine.



Sri Gopinath Temple is located at Ningthoukhong, about 24 km from Imphal. Their lordships are the second deity that were carved from the sacred jackfruit tree.



Their Lordships Sri Gopinath Ji, Sri Sri Krishna Balarama and Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva and Subhadra



Sri Gopinath Ji



Devotees at Sri Gopinath Ji Temple



Sacred tree at Sri Gopinath Ji

6. Sri Advaita Acarya Temple

Sri Advaita Acarya Temple is about 20 km from Imphal located at Lamangdong. Their Lordships are the sixth deity carved from the roots of the sacred jackfruit tree. This temple came to be known as "Advaita Prabhu" or "Lamangdong Advaita".



Sri Advaita Acarya Temple is about 20 km from Imphal located at Lamangdong.
Their Lordships are the sixth deity carved from the roots of the sacred jackfruit tree in Kaina.



Their Lordships at Sri Advaita Acarya Temple



Sri Sri Krishna Balarama at Sri Advaita Acarya Temple



Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra at Sri Advaita Acarya Temple

7. Lord Nrsimhadeva Temple

Lord Nrsimhadeva Temple is in Imphal West, located at Singjamei Naorem Leikai.



Sri Nrsimhadeva Temple in Imphal West, Manipur



Lord Nrsimhadeva in Imphal West



Lord Nrsimhadeva



Devotees doing preparations for serving Prasadam at Lord Nrsimhadeva Temple



Sri Nrsimhadeva Temple in Imphal West

8. Sri Bijoy Govinda Ji Temple

Sri Bijoy Govinda Ji Temple is in Imphal located at Sagalband. Their Lordships were the first Deity carved from the sacred jackfruit tree.



Sri Bijoy Govinda Ji Temple in Imphal



Sri Bijoy Govinda Ji

Their Lordships were the first Deity carved from the sacred jackfruit tree.



Sri Sri Krishna Balarama at Bijoy Govinda Ji Temple



Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra at Sri Bijoy Govinda Ji

9. Sri Nityananda Prabhu Temple

Sri Nityananda Prabhu Temple, Sharik Makhong, is in Imphal located at Khwai Lamabam Leikai. Their Lordships were the third Deity carved from the sacred jackfruit tree.

SHREE SHREE NITYANANDA PRABHUJI, SHARIK MAKHONG FOUNDATION STONE LAID ON 29 th APRIL 2009. INAUGURATED ON PUNAR JATRA, 2 nd JULY 2009.			
DONORS' LIST SINCE 7-5-09			
S. No.	NAME	ADDRESS	AMOUNT
1	CHINGSUBAM GOBERDHAN SINGH & FAMILY (R.J.S.)	KANGJARI MEINAM LEIKAI	Rs. 50,500
2	KISHAN THAPA	MOREH WARD No. 6	Rs. 10,000
3	NINTHOUJAM SHYAMKISHOR SINGH	CHINGMEIRONG	CEMENT 15 BAGS
4	KSHETRIMAYUM CHANDRAHAS SINGH	"	" 10 "
5	THANGJAM (O) YAIMA DEVI	NAGAMAPAL SORAM LEIRAK	"
6	KONTHOUJAM TONBI SINGH	" RIMS Rd.	Rs. 1000
7	SORAM (O) IBECHAABI DEVI	" SORAM LEIRAK	Rs. 1000
8	R.K. (O) IBECHUNGSHI DEVI	"	Rs. 1000
9	RATAN MANI SORAM	URIPOK SORDON THINGEL	Rs. 1000
10	HAORAM (O) IBECHAABI DEVI	NAGAMAPAL RIMS Rd.	Rs. 1000
11	KHURAJAM (O) LALITA DEVI	"	Rs. 1000
12	ARAMBAM (N) AMUJAABI DEVI	" PAONAM LEIKAI	Rs. 1000
13	SORAM MANGIMACHA SINGH	SOIBAM LEIKAI	Rs. 500
14	ARAMBAM (N) LEIRIKTOMBI DEVI	NAGAMAPAL RIMS Rd.	Rs. 500
15	NINTHOUJAM BIDHUMUKHI DEVI	URIPOK	Rs. 500
16	R.K. (O) PRAMODINI DEVI	SORAM LEIRAK	Rs. 200
17	SORAM (O) RANITA DEVI	NAGAMAPAL RIMS Rd.	Rs. 100
		"	Rs. 100
		"	Rs. 100

Sri Nityananda Prabhu Temple in Imphal



Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Lord Jagannatha at Sri Nityananda Prabhu Temple in Imphal

10. Sri Rama Temple

Lord Ramacandra Temple is an ancient temple in Imphal.



Ancient Sri Rama Temple in Imphal



Sri Ramacandra



Devotees at Sri Rama Temple in Imphal

11. Hanuman Temple

Hanuman Temple is in Imphal. This temple was built in 1725 AD.



Sri Hanuman Temple in Imphal



Sri Hanuman Ji

12. Sri Madan Mohan Ji Temple

Sri Madan Mohan Ji Temple is in Imphal located at Oinam Thingel. Their Lordships were the sixth Deity carved from the sacred jackfruit tree.



Sri Madan Mohan Ji Temple at Oinam Thingel, Imphal



Sri Madan Mohan Ji, Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra and Sri Sri Gaura Nitai



Sri Madan Mohan Ji

13. Sri Krishna Temple

Sri Krishna Temple is in Imphal. This temple was built during the reign of Maharaja Charairongba (1697-1709 AD).



Sri Krishna Temple Imphal



Their Lordships at Sri Krishna Temple Imphal

Ima Market: The Ima Market is one of the largest women's only market in Asia is at a stone's throw distance from the Western Gate of Kangla. It is a unique all women's market, with over 3000 "Imas" (mothers) running the stalls. Men are not allowed to sell goods at this market. Vegetables, fruits and household groceries are sold in one section, and exquisite handlooms and household tools in the other.



Ima Market is one of the largest only women market in Asia with over 3000 “Imas” (mothers) running the stalls.



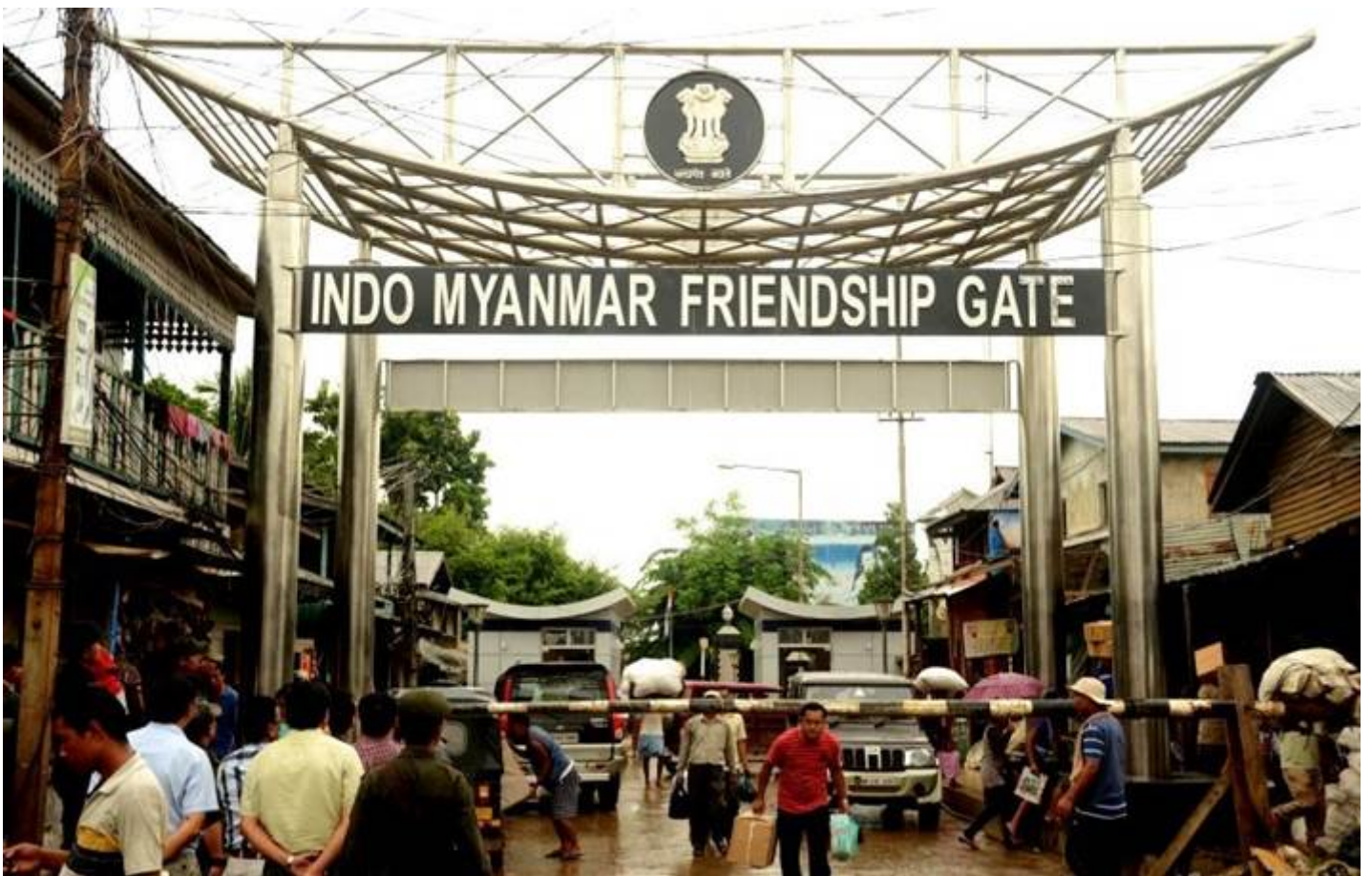
Manipuri Temple at famous Kangla Fort at the heart of Imphal



World famous Loktak Lake in Manipur



People of Manipur



India Myanmar Border at Moreh village in Manipur. The border is only 110km from the state capital, Imphal.

Arjuna's connection with Manipur

<http://www.vedabase.com/en/mbk/2/33>

“Royal families at Manipur and Tripura are descendants of Arjuna's son Babhruvahana”, as stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 1 chapter 12 verse 21 purport by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-acarya of ISKCON. Arjuna begot a son named Babhruvahana by the womb of Citrangada, the princess of Manipur. Babhruvahana became the adopted son of the king of Manipur. Arjuna married four wives: Draupadi, Subhadra, Citrangada and Ulupi, from whom he got four sons of the names Srutakirti, Abhimanyu, Babhruvahana and Iravan respectively. After the battle of Kuruksetra, when Maharaja Yudhisthira performed Ashvamedha yajna (Horse Sacrifice), Arjuna was defeated by his son Babhruvahana, when the sacrificial horse entered Manipur. Arjuna challenged Babhruvahana to fight, despite Babhruvahana's reluctance. During the fight, Arjuna fell unconscious when Ulupi saved him.

After the Battle of Kuruksetra, in Hastinapura the Pandavas settled into their lives as rulers. Yudhisthira was the embodiment of justice and virtue. None could fault him. Some months after Lord Krishna's departure, Uttara, who was staying with Kunti and Draupadi, gave birth to her son. She named him Parikshit. Soon after Parikshit's birth, Yudhisthira began to think of the sacrifice he would like to perform. He still desired to atone for the killing at Kuruksetra, and the *rsis* had recommended that he perform the Ashvamedha. As with the Rajasuya, the sacrifice would give him the opportunity to again establish his position as the earth's emperor. He would have to send out the sacrificial horse to all parts of the land. Anyone not accepting his rule would be obliged to fight.

Although he had no personal ambition to rule the earth, Yudhisthira wanted to ensure that the world was on the path of peace and religion. There could not be another Kuruksetra. It was also Krishna's desire that the virtuous Yudhisthira and his brothers be clearly established as the earth's foremost rulers. Yudhisthira thus set about making his preparations.

Knowing that the performance of an *Ashvamedha* requires immense wealth, Yudhisthira was anxious. The treasury had been seriously depleted by the war. The Pandava revealed his anxiety to Vyasadeva, who told him of a great store of wealth lying in the North. The sage told Yudhisthira about a former emperor of the earth, named Marutta, who had possessed almost unlimited wealth. He had pleased Siva by performing a sacrifice and the god had given him a mountain made of gold. From that mountain he had fashioned sacrificial altars of pure gold, as well as vast numbers of gold plates and other utensils. These were now lying in a cave in the Himalayas. Vyasadeva instructed Arjuna how to find the cave and Arjuna left at once, returning after a month with the immense riches carried on a seemingly endless line of bullocks and elephants.

Yudhisthira then invited rulers from around the world to attend the sacrifice. He wanted to establish peaceful relations with all kings, but he knew that there would be a lot of inimical feelings left from the war. There were many kings who had not participated in the Kuruksetra war who would likely be neutral, but there were also some kings whose fathers or brothers had been killed by the Pandavas and who harboured enmity with them. Knowing this, Yudhisthira asked Arjuna to follow the sacrificial horse. Anyone seeing the horse and not agreeing to Yudhisthira's rule would have to face Arjuna. The Pandava put on his golden armour and prepared himself for the expedition.

After being blessed by the *Brahmins*, Arjuna set off in pursuit of the horse. He was followed by a large body of warriors, as well as a number of sages who would perform the sacred rites to invoke auspiciousness and ensure his success. Yudhisthira had earnestly entreated Arjuna not to kill anyone unless it was absolutely unavoidable. Remembering this, he first tried to establish peaceful relations through diplomacy; but in some cases, he was forced to take up arms. He fought a battle with the *Trigartas*, who bore him enmity for having slain their king, and his brothers during the war. After they had been overpowered, another fierce fight took place between Arjuna and king Vajradatta, the son of Bhagadatta. That battle lasted for three days, with Arjuna finally defeating Vajradatta but sparing his life. After the king had agreed to bring tribute for Yudhisthira's sacrifice, Arjuna moved south.

A powerful battle took place with the Sindhus, who were grieving Jayadratha's death. Tens of thousands of warriors came out to contend with Arjuna. He attacked them with arrows from the Gandiva, cutting their weapons to pieces and forcing them to flee.

In the Sindhu capital, Duryodhana's sister Dushala lived. When she saw that Arjuna was crushing her troops, she came hastily out of the city holding an infant in her arms. Seeing her rushing onto the field with her child, the warriors lowered their weapons. She fell before Arjuna, crying. "Stop, O hero! Do not destroy the last of our race. See here this child, who is your own relative, the son of my son. Out of sheer grief for Jayadratha's death, the father of this boy has given up his life. Now you, Jayadratha's killer, are bent upon annihilating the rest of his family and followers. O Arjuna, pray forget the sins of this child's grandfather and have mercy on him."

Seeing the weeping Dushala, whom he regarded as a sister, Arjuna cast aside his bow. He censured the life of a ksatriya and cried out, "Fie on the wicked Duryodhana! That mean person, so covetous of the kingdom, has brought about the death of all my kinsmen." Arjuna got down from his chariot and consoled Dushala. She turned to the Sindhu warriors and told them to put down their weapons and make peace with Arjuna. They complied. Arjuna then dismissed her and she returned to the city, leaving him to continue his travels.

The horse reached Manipur, where Arjuna was greeted peacefully by his own son Babhruvahana, whom he had conceived with the princess Citrangada. As Arjuna had agreed at the time of his birth, Babhruvahana had remained at Manipur, ruling that kingdom and not taking any part in the great war. He came to Arjuna with offerings of gold and gems, but Arjuna was nevertheless clearly displeased. His mind was seized with anger and he shouted out to his son, "Why, O child, have you come in peace when an antagonist has entered your land? This is never in keeping with ksatriya duties. You have acted like a woman! I have come here bearing arms, and you should have challenged me with heroic words. O wretched boy, take up your weapons and give me battle."

Babhruvahana was surprised by his father's reaction. He tried to appease him, but Arjuna would not listen. He repeatedly goaded his son to fight. As that exchange was taking place, Ulupi suddenly appeared from the earth. The daughter of the Naga king, and Arjuna's wife, stood before Babhruvahana and said, "Listen, O prince. I am Ulupi, your mother, and have come here desiring to do both you and your father good. Fight with him, for this will please him and you will then acquire merit."

Hearing his stepmother's words as well as the repeated urgings of his father, the prince agreed. After putting on his blazing armour and mounting a chariot, he stood before his father ready for battle. Seeing the sacrificial horse nearby, Babhruvahana had some of his men seize it and take it into his city. Arjuna was incensed and he rained down arrows on his powerful son.

A terrible fight took place between father and son. Both showed no quarter, releasing countless arrows at one another. Arjuna was suddenly struck on the shoulder by a steel shaft that pierced him deeply and made him almost lose consciousness. He leaned on his standard pole. When he regained his senses, he praised his son. "Excellent! Well done! O son of Citrangada, I am pleased with you for your prowess and power. Now stand fearlessly, for I will let lose my terrible shafts."

Arjuna fought relentlessly, shooting arrows which smashed his son's chariot and killed his horses. Jumping to the ground, the prince stood fearlessly before his father. In a moment he took out a long golden arrow bedecked with jewels and *kanka* feathers and fired it from his fully drawn bow. That arrow sped toward Arjuna and struck him on the chest, piercing his armour. Gasping in pain, Arjuna fell from his car and lay on the earth. Babhruvahana, himself pierced all over by Arjuna's shafts, was seized with grief upon seeing his father killed. Overpowered, he too fell to the ground.

Citrangada heard that her husband and son had both fallen on the battlefield. She rushed out of the city. Seeing them lying there, she too fainted. When she had recovered her senses, she saw Ulupi standing before her. Knowing that Babhruvahana had fought his father at her behest, she said, "O Ulupi, see our ever-victorious husband slain as a result of your instructions to my son. Do you not know the practices of respectable women? Are you not devoted to your husband? If Arjuna has offended you in some way, you should have forgiven him. Why are you not grieving? O snake-lady, you are a goddess. I beseech you to revive our husband."

Citrangada ran over to Arjuna and fell to the ground weeping. With the arrow protruding from his chest and blood seeping from the wound, he seemed like a hill with a tree on the summit and its rocks running with red oxide. The Manipur princess placed Arjuna's feet in her lap and cried uncontrollably. Regaining consciousness, Babhruvahana got to his feet and ran over to his father. Along with his mother, he too began to cry. In a choked voice he lamented, "Alas, what have I done? What is the atonement for one who has killed his father? I should doubtlessly suffer every sort of misery for such a sin. Indeed, I cannot

continue my life. I will sit by my father's side, abstaining from food and drink, until death takes me. Let me follow the path taken by Arjuna."

The prince cried for some time, then fell silent. He sat in a yogic posture next to Arjuna and prepared to observe the Praya vow of fasting until death. Seeing both her co-wife and stepson overcome by sorrow, Ulupi approached them. By her mystic power she fetched from the Naga kingdom a celestial gem that had the power to revive the dead. Taking the effulgent gem, which shone with a hundred different hues, she went over to Babhruvahana and said, "Rise up, O son. You have not killed Arjuna. Indeed, neither man nor god can slay him. He is an eternal *rsi* of indestructible soul. His apparent death is simply an illusion. O child, take this gem and place it on your father's chest and he will rise."

The prince did as he was told and, almost at once, Arjuna opened his eyes. His wound healed and he sat up and looked around. Babhruvahana sighed with relief. He bowed at his father's feet and begged forgiveness. Kettledrums resounded in the sky and a shower of flowers fell. Voices in the heavens called out, "Excellent! Excellent!"

Arjuna stood up and embraced his son with affection. "What is the cause of all these signs?" he asked. "Why has your mother Citrangada come onto the field? Why do I also see the Naga princess here?" Babhruvahana told his father to ask Ulupi. Arjuna looked at her, the question in his eyes. "What brings you here, O daughter of the Nagas? Have you come here desiring to do us good? I hope neither I nor my son have done you any injury."

Ulupi smiled and reassured Arjuna that she had not been offended. She had urged the prince to fight to serve both him and Arjuna. "Listen to my words, O mighty-armed Arjuna. During the war you deceitfully killed Bhishma, placing Sikhandi before you when you approached him. For that sin you would have fallen into hell, but your sin has been expiated by your son's actions."

Ulupi explained that soon after Bhishma's fall, she had seen the Vasus come to the river Ganges to bathe. While they were there, they called for the goddess Ganga and said, "Arjuna has unfairly slain your son. For this we will curse him to die." Ganga had agreed. Seeing all this, Ulupi had gone before her father in anxiety. She told him what she had seen and her father, king of the Nagas, went at once to the Vasus. He begged them to be merciful to Arjuna, his son-in-law, and they replied, "Dhananjaya has a youthful son who is now king of Manipur. That king will cast his father down in battle and free him from our curse."

Ulupi continued, "It is for this reason that you were slain by your son. Indeed, not even Indra could kill you, but it is said that the son is one's own self. After he killed you, I revived you with this celestial gem." Ulupi showed Arjuna the brilliant jewel and he cheerfully replied, "Everything you have done is agreeable to me, O goddess. You have not committed any fault."

Babhruvahana beseeched Arjuna to spend a night in the city with his two wives, but Arjuna declined, saying that he could not rest until the sacrificial horse returned to Hastinapura. He took leave from his wives and his son, who said he would soon come to Yudhisthira's sacrifice. After telling his wives to join him in Hastinapura, he continued on his way in pursuit of the horse.

Directions to reach Imphal:

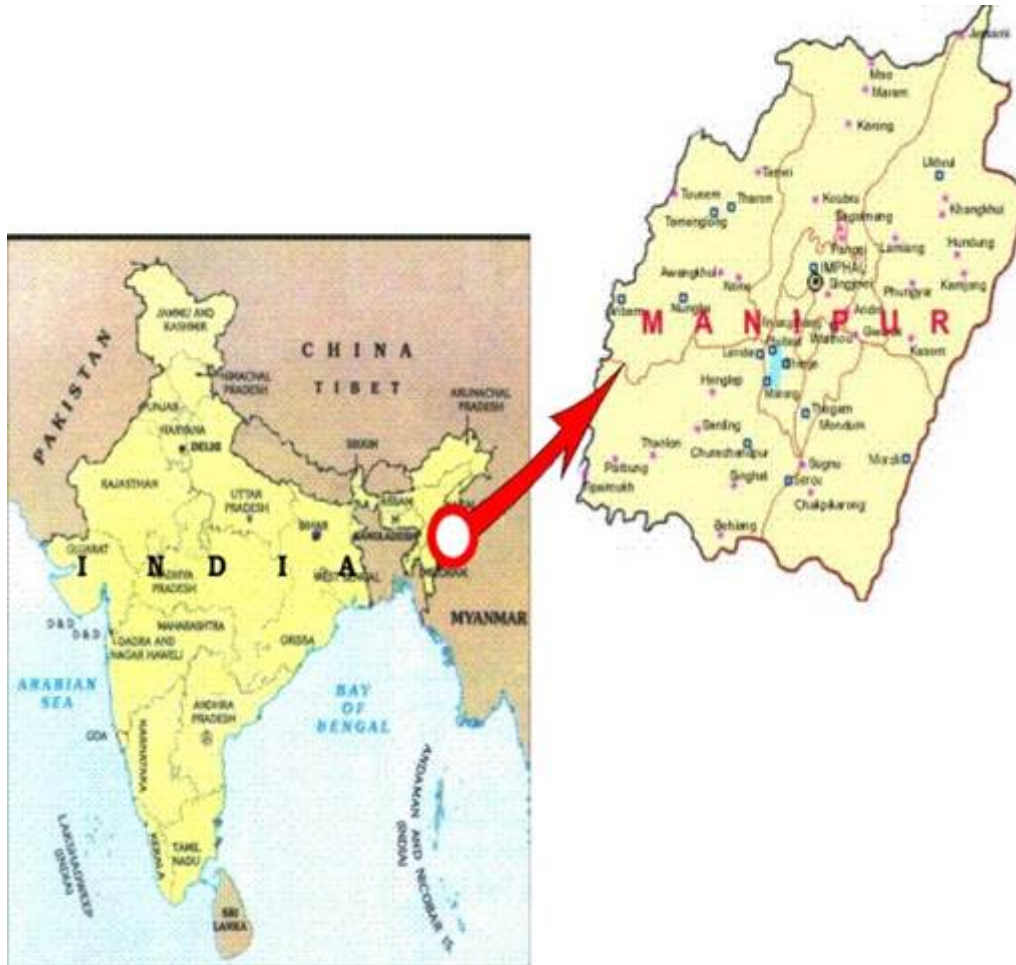
The beautiful city of Imphal, the capital of Manipur is connected by Air, Train and Bus from other places as follows:

By Air to Imphal: Imphal Tulihal Airport is located about 8km from the heart of the City and is well connected directly from the major cities of India namely Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Guwahati and major cities of North Eastern States on daily basis.

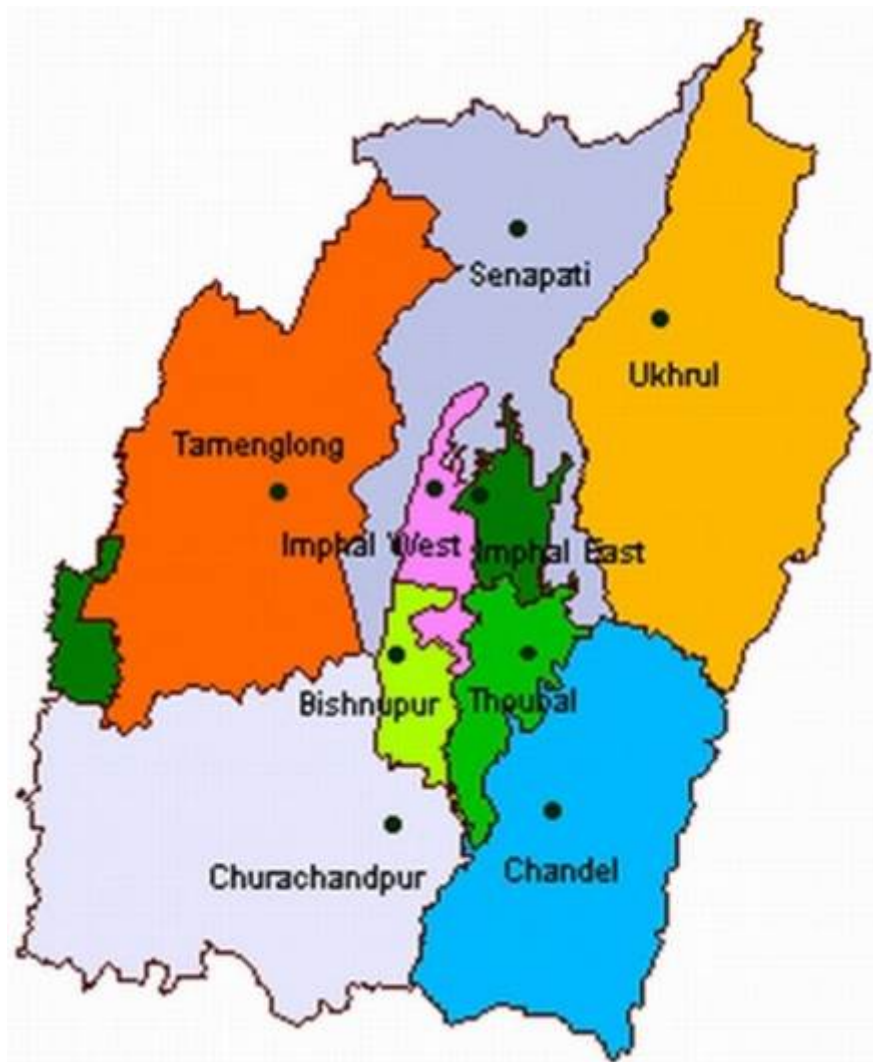
By Bus to Imphal:

- 1. From Guwahati daily on the NH 27, NH 29 and NH 2 via Dimapur and Kohima many private buses available.*
- 2. From Dimapur daily on the NH 2 via Kohima Manipur many private buses available.*
- 3. From Silchar daily on the NH 37 via Jiribam many private buses available.*

By Train to Imphal: There is no direct train service to Imphal. But travellers can travel up to Guwahati or Dimapur (nearest rail head from Imphal) and then rest by bus or by air.



Manipur Map



Manipur Map

HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami Maharaj: <http://bhaktiswarupadamodara.com>

Srila Prabhupada's Letter to HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami:

[https://vaniquotes.org/wiki/I_have_great_respect_for_Manipur_which_was_a_Kshatriya_kingdom_long_bef
ore_Arjuna.You_can_do_it_you_are_educated_and_a_devotee_and_we_shall_all_help_you.That_is_wan
ted](https://vaniquotes.org/wiki/I_have_great_respect_for_Manipur_which_was_a_Kshatriya_kingdom_long_before_Arjuna.You_can_do_it_you_are_educated_and_a_devotee_and_we_shall_all_help_you.That_is_wanted)

A letter to HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=1957>

Audio lectures of HH Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami:

[http://audio.iskcondesiretree.com/index.php?q=f&f=%2F02 - ISKCON Swamis%2FISKCON Swamis -
_A_to_C%2FHis_Holiness_Bhakti_Swarupa_Damodara_Swami](http://audio.iskcondesiretree.com/index.php?q=f&f=%2F02%20-%20ISKCON%20Swamis%20-%20A%20to%20C%20His%20Holiness%20Bhakti%20Swarupa%20Damodara%20Swami)

Bhaktivedanta Institute School, Imphal: <http://bimhss.org>

Bhaktivedanta Institute: <http://www.binstitute.org/>

Arjuna's connection with Manipur: <http://www.vedabase.com/en/mbk/2/33>

Mayapur TV: <http://Mayapur.tv> / **Vrindavana TV:** <http://Vrindavana.tv>

Holy Pilgrimages: www.Holy-Pilgrimages.com / **Facebook:**

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Holy Dham: www.HolyDham.com

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